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## SMAKSPEARE.

## AN ODE

FOR

his Three-hundredth Birthday.

F

Immortal! rifen to thy Rest,
Immortal! throned among the Blest,
Immortal! long an heir sublime
Of realms outreaching space and time,—
How shall we dare, or hope, to raise
A fitting homage of high praise
To please thy Spirit, sphered on high
Where planets roll and comets sty?
How may not thy pure same be marr'd
By the damp breath of earthly bard,
Presuming in his zeal too bold
To gild the bright resined gold?

Or how canst Thou, fill'd with God's love, And tranced among the saints above, Endure that men should seem and be Idolators in praise of Thee? Forgive our love, forgive our zeal,—We cannot guess how spirits seel; And may our homage offered thus Please HIM who made both thee, and us!

1-00

A.

Immortal also on this darker Earth As in those brightest spheres, Now will we confecrate our Shakspeare's birth, This day three hundred years! And fo from age to age for evermore His glory shall extend, With men of every land the wide world o'er, Till Time itself shall end! For, he is our's; and well with pride and joy England may blefs her fon, The Stratford scholar and the Warwick boy That every crown hath won! Let others boast their wisest and their best, To each a prize may fall; Genius gives one apiece to all the rest, But Shakspeare claims them all!

Momer, in majestic eloquence, A Terence, for keen wit and stinging sense, Brighter than Pindar in his loftiest flight, Darker than Æschylus for deeds of night, An Ovid, in the story-pictured page, A Juvenal, to lash the vicious age, Graceful as Horace and more skill'd to please, Tender as pity-stirring Sophocles, Free as Anacreon, as Martial neat, Than Virgil's felf more delicately fweet,-O let those ancients bend before Thee now, And pile their many chaplets on one brow !-Milton was great, and of divinest song, Spenfer melodious, Chaucer rough and strong,— The vigorous Dryden, and the claffic Gray, And awful Dante, foaring far away, Schiller and Goethe, stirring up the strife, And Molière, dropping laughter into life, Burns, a full spring of nature, Hood of wit, And Tennyson, most rare and exquisite, To each and all belongs the laurell'd crown,-And woe to him who drags their honours down,-Yet, Shakspeare, Thou wert all these lights combined, O many-fided crystal of mankind!

M.

the witty rare fat knight,



And grand old Lear half-infane, And fell Iago's spite, And Romeo's love, and Tybalt's hate, And Bolingbroke in regal state, And he that murdered fleep,-And ruthless Shylock's bloody bond, And Prosper with his broken wand Long buried fathoms deep! Frank Juliet too, - and that foft pair Helen and Hermia, lilies fair As growing on one stem, Love-crazed Ophelia, drown'd, ah! drown'd, And wanton Cleopatra, crown'd With Egypt's diadem; The young Miranda most admired, Cordelia's filial heart, Sly Beatrice with wit inspired, And Ariel's trickfey part, Fair Rosalind, - sweet banished, And gentle Desdemona—dead!— Ay, these - all these, and crowds beside, Heroes, jesters, courtiers, clowns, Girls in grief, or kings in pride, Threats and crimes, and jokes, and frowns, Witches, fairies, ghosts, and elves, All our fancies, all ourselves,— O! Thou hast pictured with thy pen All phases of all hearts of men, And in thy various page furvives The Panorama of our lives!

Paragon unthought before, O miracle of felf-taught lore, A universe of wit and worth, The admirable Man of earth, There is nor thing, nor thought, nor whim, Untouch'd and unadorn'd by him; No theme unfung, no truth untold Of Earth's museum, new or old: All Nature's hidden things he faw, Intuitive to every law; Glancing with fupernal fcan At all the knowledge spelt by man; While, for each rule and craft of Art He grasp'd it amply, whole and part: Like travel-wife Ulyffes well he knew Peoples and cities, men and manners too; With shrewd but ever charitable ken He read, and wrote out fair, the hearts of men; Yet, in felf-knowledge vers'd, a fage outright,

O gentle, happy, modest mind,
O genial, cheerful, frank and kind,
Not even could domestic strife
Sour the sweetness of thy life,—
But, wheresoe'er thy foot might roam,
Divorced from that Xantippe'd home,
Friends ever found thee,—ay, and foes,
Cordial to these, and kind to those;

His giant foul was humble in its might!

Brave, loving, patient, generous, just, and good,—Beloved by all, our matchless Shakspeare stood!

there are thy glorious works unknown? Who hath not heard thy fame? On every shore, in every zone, The World, with glad acclaim, Yea, from the cottage to the throne, Hath magnified thy name! From far Australia to Vancouver's pines, From the High Alps to Russia's deepest mines, From China, with her English lesson learnt, To Chili, wailing for her daughters burnt; There, everywhere, our Shakspeare breathes and moves In the fweet ether of all human loves!-Where rent America now writhes in woe, Where Nile and Danube, Thames and Ganges flow, Wherever England fails, and human kind Anywhere feels in heart, and thinks in mind, There, everywhere, our Shakspeare's voice is heard, By him all fouls are thrill'd, and cheer'd, and stirr'd; Each paffion flows or ebbs, as Shakspeare speaks, Hate knits the brow, or terror pales the cheeks, Love lights the eyes, or pity melts the heart, And all men bow beneath our Poet's art!

What monument to rear,
What worthy offering?—
Nought lacks thy glory here
Of all thy fons can bring:
Long fince, a twin-sphered brother spake,
How vain it were to raise
To such a Name, for Memory's sake,
Its pyramid of praise:
Our Shakspeare needs no sculptured stones,

No temple for his honoured bones!

But haply, in his native street

Beside the rescued home

Hallowed by his infant seet

Whereto all pilgrims roam,

A College well might rear its head,

That Townsman's name to bear,

And brother-actors' sons be bred

To light and learning there!

And, for great London and its throngs,—
To Shakspeare of old right belongs
The Shakspeare Bridge, with Shakspeare scenes
Sculptured upon its pannell'd screens,
Coloffus-like the Thames to span,
And telling every passing man
Where a poor player in his youth
Served Heaven and Earth by mimic truth,
And wrapped in Art's and Nature's robe,
Leased,—'twas his Heritage—the Globe!—



Denizen of every clime,
Darling poet of mankind,
Mafter of the human mind,
Nature's very priest and king,—
Take the gifts thy children bring!
Let thy Spirit, hovering o'er
Thine earthly home and haunts of yore,
In its wisdom, wealth, and worth,
Shine upon us from above,
While thy kinsmen here on earth
Thus with pious care and love
Celebrate our Shakspeare's birth.

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